Rome Scala Santa
8th Jan.y 1894

My dear Maria

Many thanks for such a bit of good news for I was afraid in the little delay there might be some bad, but I am encouraged to write you as you have always so many pleasant things to tell me, but I hope you explain that my present writing is caused by your being alone as well as your being so dear a sister, so that I cannot write to Charles & the others dear ones on your account as I know you are always looking for a scribble from me & I cannot bear to disappoint you.

I'm glad you've heard from Eleanor with her Photos which are very beautiful – also Rosie of Joan & one I had from Mary – these are a continued delight to me, for as I cannot hope ever to go & see the originals; so these excellent reproductions fill up the vacant space of my longing.

Is it possible that I shall ever see them?

if a kindly Providence should spare me so long as to see them? That is my own coming home and I Madam Valeré desires that they should all come together this summer, for with my grandchildren in New Zealand I reckon that I have 24 of them It seems impossible that I should last out so long yet there is living here a Col Caldwell who is 92 years old & is still giving dinner parties!! Abstemious habits have much to do with great age in this climate & I am an example, for I never take spirits or any thing indeed like dessert fine ample sleep - Memory memory is a great amusement to me for I can live my days over again & I seem not to have forgot a thing People I have known, this I'll try, indeed I am more writing my life or other matters, but I find the writing is a little irksome, except to you

It grieves me that you are suffering in your back which must interrupt you in your household matters, but I hope you lie down in the day time

The bad weather has shut me up a good while for Rome is very damp & at times I am filled with pains — Thursday was very fine & I am going to leave this & expect to find the Almonds in flower & the Elder in leaf

10th. I did not find them, but the air is divine & they'll soon put forth altho' we have frosty mornings which keeps me late in bed. For sometimes I'm not up till 8 & 9 O! how I long for the early mornings when I can be up at 5 & 6 — but then dawn is not till 7 here & the Winter is often very ugly with rain & mist

My evenings are long & lonely tho my vivacious memory keeps me alive, at last — & I am at my supper, & you'll want to know what it is — a cup of excellent turkey broth with an egg in it, this I always take at present as it enables me to sleep sound 8 & 9 hours

I have at last got strong enough to go out alone (that is a Cab) to some nice place where I can walk for ½ an hour, but it must be amongst trees & flowers, cab & walk just one hour —

8th Sunday

I open the ball first I have just got a most charming letter from Eleanor from Cornwall – They cannot come to Rome until April, & she is anxious beforehand if I can receive them, what I am happy to say I can do in good style, a board & bed for nine. Next I have the Doctor & his wife here is every opportunity which I had not before

9th Monday

My progress is really encouraging & I may now hope to be soon well – For many years I have been a sufferer